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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION AUTHORIZES QWEST TO PROVIDE LONG DISTANCE SERVICE IN NINE STATES

Washington, D.C. – Today, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) announced that it voted to approve Qwest's multi-state application to provide in-region, interLATA service originating in the following nine states: Colorado, Idaho, Iowa, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. Approval of Qwest's multi-state application promises benefits to consumers by making increased competition in all markets for telecommunications services possible.

Qwest stated in its application that competing carriers serve approximately 23% of all lines in Colorado, 11% of all lines in Idaho, 18% of all lines in Iowa, 6% of all lines in Montana, 32% of all lines in Nebraska, 22% of all lines in North Dakota, 23% of all lines in Utah, 19% of all lines in Washington, and 12% of all lines in Wyoming. With the FCC's approval of Qwest's nine state application, about 75% of Bell Operating Company (BOC) lines have been approved for in-region, interLATA service.

With the Telecommunications Act of 1996 (1996 Act), Congress envisioned fundamental, pro-competitive changes in the telecommunications markets by making a BOC's entry into the long distance market subject to it first opening its local service market to competition. A BOC satisfies this contingency by demonstrating compliance with section 271 of the 1996 Act. After a BOC files a section 271 long distance application with the FCC, the FCC has 90 days to determine whether a BOC has taken the statutorily required steps to open its local telecommunications markets to competition, including compliance with the 1996 Act's 14-point "competitive checklist" in section 271.

Since the passage of the 1996 Act, the FCC has denied five long distance applications and now has approved applications to provide in-region, long distance service in 35 states. Additionally, applications for 16 states have been withdrawn. Currently, there are section 271 applications for 3 states – Verizon's joint application for Maryland, Washington DC, and West Virginia – pending before the Commission.

A summary of all section 271 applications can be accessed at the following FCC web page:

www.fcc.gov/Bureaus/Common_Carrier/in-region_applications/

The FCC emphasizes that Qwest must continue to comply with the section 271 checklist requirements, and the Commission has a number of enforcement tools at its disposal to ensure compliance, including imposing penalties or suspension of approval.

-FCC-

Docket No.: WC 02-314

Action by the Commission December 20, 2002, by Memorandum Opinion and Order (FCC 02-332). Commissioner Copps issuing a statement; and Commissioner Adelstein not participating.

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News about the Federal Communications Commission can also be found on the Commission's web site www.fcc.gov.